Nova Scotia

ANNUAL REPORT

for the fiscal year
ending March 31, 1989

Advisory Council on the Status of Women

To His Honour

The Honourable Lloyd R. Crouse, P.C.
The Lieutenant Governor of Nova Scotia

Sir:

I have the honour to submit herewith the report of the Nova Scotia Advisory Council on the Status of Women for the fiscal year ended March 31, 1989.

Respectfully submitted,

Donald P. McInnes
Minister in Charge of Administration
of the Advisory Council on the Status
of Women Act

91-06920/

The Honourable Donald P. McInnes
Minister in Charge of Administration
of the Advisory Council on the
Status of Women Act

Sir:

On behalf of the Nova Scotia Advisory Council on the Status of Women, I am pleased to present you with our 12th Annual Report covering the period April I, 1988, to March 31, 1989.

Respectfully submitted,

Debi Forsyth-Smith

Debi Forsyth-Smith
President

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COUNCIL'S MANDATE

The Nova Scotia Advisory Council on the Status of Women was established as a result of Bill 146, *An Act to Establish an Advisory Council on the Status of Women*, which was passed into legislation in 1977.

Our purpose as a Council is to advise and report to the Nova Scotia government, through the Minister Responsible for Administration of the Status of Women Act, on matters relating to the opportunity for full and equal participation of Nova Scotia women in the life of the province. To achieve this, our main objectives are:

- to advise the Minister upon such matters relating to the status of women as are referred to the Council for consideration by the Minister, and
- to bring to the attention of the Minister matters of interest and concern to women.

Under the Act the Council is charged with the following duties:

- receiving and hearing petitions and suggestions concerning the status of women
- undertaking and recommending research on matters relevant to the status of women
- recommending and participating in programs concerning the status of women
- proposing legislation, policies, and practices to promote equality of opportunity
- publishing reports, studies, and recommendations

Today, the Council advises, reports, conducts research, and makes recommendations to the Nova Scotia government on matters relating to women. As well, Nova Scotia women increasingly call upon the Council for assistance in areas such as women's legal rights, employment problems, and health concerns.

As the primary administrator, the President directs the day-to-day activities of the Council office in Halifax. A staff of seven full-time

employees conducts extensive research, produces publications and background reports, serves as a focus for networking activities, provides up-to-date information on women's issues through the Council's resource centre, and offers directional assistance to women seeking access to social or other programs. In addition, the Council administers a field work program with five part-time employees who liaise with women living outside the Halifax-Dartmouth metropolitan area.

Issues of concern to Nova Scotian women are identified through direct consultation and communication with women's groups and organizations, as well as with individual women, on both a regional and a province-wide basis. Once identified, issues are researched and necessary recommendations developed and presented to government for action. Public and government awareness of issues of concern to women are consistently promoted by the Council.

COUNCIL MEMBERS

The Council consists of 12 members appointed by the Governor in Council (in effect, the provincial Cabinet) through an open application process. Members, including the chairperson and vice chairperson, are appointed for terms of two or three years. Members collectively represent the regional, cultural, and ethnic diversity of the province, and they vary in age and life experience. Their interests include health, education, legal issues, work in the home, work in the wage sector, parenting, and grandparenting. The president has the status of a deputy head and is employed full-time at the Council office for the term of her appointment. The Council reports directly to the Minister in charge of administration of the Status of Women Act, the Honourable Donald P. McInnes.

Debi FORSYTH-SMITH, President
April 1987–April 1990

Diane McILVENA
Cumberland-Colchester
November 1987–November 1989

Linda CARVERY
Halifax
November 1983–December 1988

Linda OLIVER
Halifax
November 1983–August 1988

Marie CROOKER, Vice Chairperson
South Shore
August 1986–January 1991

Pauline d'ENTREMONT
South West Nova
August 1985–August 1989

Deborah DORT
Cape Breton Highlands–Canso
February 1989–January 1991

Sheri GAETZ, Chairperson
Dartmouth
March 1985–August 1989

Catherine GARDINER
Cape Breton–The Sydneys
August 1986–resigned June 1988

Donna LASSALINE
Dartmouth
December 1984–December 1988

Irene MacISAAC
Cape Breton Highlands–Canso
September 1980–December 1988

Eyleen MacLEOD
Central Nova
November 1987–November 1989

Joyce ROBART
Halifax
February 1989–January 1991

Myrna SLATER
Halifax
March 1985–August 1989

Agnes SULLIVAN
Cape Breton–East Richmond
March 1985–August 1989

CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

As it was for any other organization, group, or indeed, individual who was working to promote equality of opportunity for women in Nova Scotia, 1988–89 was no less busy nor less involved nor less heartbreaking nor less exciting than previous years.

For the Advisory Council, it was, in some respects, a very positive year. Our first accomplishment in 1988 was the publication of a report on a series of workshops that the Council had conducted on pay equity, a topic that became a particular focus in light of pay equity legislation that was introduced in the provincial legislature last spring.

Our next project was the research and development of a brief to the Royal Commission on Health Care, which was presented in June and focused on women as consumers of the health care system, particularly in relation to the reproductive lives of women. A focus of that brief was a recommendation for an independent body to monitor the complaints from the public in regard to the medical profession.

It is unlikely that anyone living in Halifax in the summer of 1988 would have been unaware of the Advisory Council's involvement in the concerns of many women who felt they had been sexually exploited or harassed by their physicians. The experiences of those women highlighted for many of us the need to review the procedures of the Provincial Medical Board of Nova Scotia. As a result of our involvement in those cases, a group called Advocates for Medical Ethics Now (AMEN) formed to proved support to women who had encountered similar experiences at the hands of physicians and the Provincial Medical Board.

Beginning in June of 1988 the Advisory Council hosted a series of public consultations that took us to eight locations throughout the province. One purpose of these consultations was to provide women with some understanding of our plan of action, but primarily they were conducted to hear from women living in rural and isolated parts of our province about their priorities and concerns. While we were disappointed at the number of women who were able to join us at some of these meetings, we certainly learned a great deal about the problems facing women throughout the province. We also have reaffirmed our commitment to reach out to as many women as possible so that their priorities predominate, rather than our interpretation of their priorities.

Other areas we have focused on include:

- a brief on women and aging
- a campaign on sexual harassment in the workplace
- human rights recommendations to the provincial government
- a brief to the federal legislative committee on Bill C–144 relating to child care
- International Women's Day festivities
- the upgrading of our resource centre
- the compilation of a retrospective index of Council recommendations and position statements from 1977 to the present.

We feel we have made significant strides in establishing a strong public presence through our positive liaison with the media and women's organizations.

No annual report would be complete without a word of thanks to our field workers and their capable efforts to represent the Council in their own areas of the province. They are indeed our basic link to the women of Nova Scotia, and we are pleased to announce that our field workers will now be working with us on a part-time basis for 12 months each year and have become permanent members of our organization.

When one considers the individual casework that is ongoing from day to day as we attempt to assist women in difficulty, this report reflects only a fraction of the yearly activities undertaken by an extremely hard-working organization.

—Sheri Gaetz, Chairperson

GROUPS ADDRESSED AND CONFERENCES ATTENDED

Communication with Nova Scotians is of prime importance to the Nova Scotia Advisory Council on the Status of Women. The President, Council Members and staff are available to meet with groups, organizations and invidiuals. Members of the public are encouraged to communicate with the Council Member or Field Worker representing their area. The following represent some of the groups the Council has liaised with in 1988–89:

Speaking Engagements

Bell Park Academic Centre Human Rights Days (Lake Echo)

CEIC Job Re-entry Program for Immigrant Women (Halifax)

Chrysalis House Annual Meeting (Kentville)

Cooperative Education Program, Sir John A. MacDonald High School (Armdale)

Council of Women (Truro)

Cumberland County Transition House Association (Amherst)

Day Care Workers, Russell C. Gordon School (Greenwood)

Eastern Shore District High School Convocation (Musquodoboit Harbour)

Hants County P.C. Women's Association (Windsor)

Dalhousie University School of Library & Information Studies (Halifax)

Hants North Rural High School - Grade 9 class (Kennetcook)

Liverpool Business & Professional Women's Club (Liverpool)

Milford Youth Group (Milford)

Military Wives of HMCS Scotian (Halifax)

Northwood Senior Citizens' Centre (Halifax)

Parents without Partners (Truro)

Professional Secretaries International (Halifax-Dartmouth Chapter)

Registered Nurses Association of Nova Scotia (Antigonish)

Registered Nurses Association of Nova Scotia (Halifax)

Rotary Club (Wolfville)

United Church Women's Group (Kingston)

Victoria General Hospital Department of Nursing Practice Development (Halifax)

Women in Education (Guysborough)
Women in Science & Engineering (Halifax)
Women's Institutes of Nova Scotia Annual Conference (Truro)
YWCA Women in Transition Training Program Convocation (Halifax)
Young Progressive Conservatives Association (Halifax)
Zonta Clubs (Truro, Kentville)

Conferences/Workshops/Seminars: Invited as Participant

AIDS Forum (Hants East Rural High School)
Childcare Advocacy '88, Childcare Advocacy Association of Nova Scotia (Halifax)
Colchester Women's Resource Centre Annual Meeting (Truro)
Joint Meetings of Federal/Provincial/Territorial Advisory Councils on the Status of Women (Calgary and Winnipeg)
Mothers United for Social Transformation In-Service (Sheet Harbour)
Radio and Television News Directors Association Convention (Truro)
Reproductive Technology and Women, Council of Women (Truro)
"Flying on Your Own" Conference for Women Entrepreneurs (Halifax)
Public Debate on Pornography (Waverley)
"Working with Families in Poverty," Nova Scotia Association of Social Workers (Spryfield)
Women in Business Seminar, Halifax Board of Trade
Women in Non-Traditional Trades (Kings County)
Women and the Law (Halifax)
Women and the Work Place (Cheticamp)
Working with Women (Glace Bay)
Workshop on Adult Incest Survivors (Eastern Shore)
Rights of Women Patients Workshop, Women's Action Coalition Mid-Year Conference (New Glasgow)
Halifax City High Schools Public Speaking Contest
Literacy Conference (Truro)
Task Force on Levels of Cost-Sharing for Municipal Assistance (Halifax)

Conferences/Workshops/Seminars: Sponsored/Facilitated

Cancer Information Workshop (Hants County)

"Getting Down to Business: A Conference for and about Women Entrepreneurs" (Amherst)

Human Rights Conference (Sydney)

"Menopause and Hysterectomies" Workshop (Truro)

Pay Equity Workshop (Milford)

"Sexism in the Church" (Truro)

"Women Alone" Information Sessions (Truro)

Formal Briefs/Presentations: Delivered/Submitted

Nova Scotia Royal Commission on Health Care

Nova Scotia Task Force on Aging

Submission to Federal Legislative Committee on Bill C–144 *(the Canada Child Care Act)*

Submission to the Government of Nova Scotia regarding proposed changes to the *Nova Scotia Human Rights Act*

Conferences/Public Meetings/Forums: Attended

Annual Conference of Atlantic Provinces Criminology and Corrections Associations (Greenwich)

"New Visions: Directions for Social and Economic Change," Task Force on Full Employment (Halifax)

Public Legal Education Society Patients' Rights Workshop (Halifax)

"Feminism and Political Power," National Action Committee on the Status of Women 16th Annual Meeting (Ottawa)

Canadian Gerontology Association Annual Meeting (Halifax)

Canadian Teachers' Federation Conference on the Status of Women (Halifax)

"Beyond Barriers: Options for Seniors," One Voice (Ottawa)

"Working with Adult Incest Survivors," Nova Scotia Hospital (Dartmouth)

"Childcare: Meeting the Challenge," Canadian Childcare Advocacy Association (Ottawa)

"Promoting Self Help," Canadian Mental Health Association (Halifax)

"Women in Research Symposium," Mount Saint Vincent University (Halifax)

"And Your Daughters Shall Prophesy," Women's Inter-Church Council (Halifax)

Women's Health Education Network Annual Meeting (Truro)

"Preserving the Black Family," Association of Black Social Workers (Halifax)

"The Political Woman," Canadian Women for Political Representation (Ottawa)

"Working More Effectively with Low-Income Families," Nova Scotia Nutrition Council (Halifax)

"Flying on Your Own: A Conference by and for Women Entrepreneurs," Nova Scotia Department of Small Business Development (Halifax)

"Women and the Economy: Building International Linkages," Institute for the Study of Women (Halifax)

Black Cultural Centre Fifth Anniversary Celebrations (Dartmouth)

Nova Scotia Government Retired Employees Association 3rd Annual Meeting (Halifax)

"Self-Help Connection," Canadian Mental Health Association (Halifax)

"A Time to Stand Together," Women's Action Coalition of Nova Scotia Mid-Year Conference (Stellarton)

"Interventions for Children of Divorce," Maritime School of Social Work (Halifax)

"Striving and Thriving," National Conference on Women in Trades and Technology (Penticton, B.C.)

Eighth Biennial Conference of Women and the Law (Montreal)

COMMITTEE REPORTS

ECONOMIC EQUALITY COMMITTEE

The Economic Equality Committee was established in April 1988 with the following terms of reference:

- to monitor current government initiatives such as pay equity and other programs designed to ensure economic equality for women;
- to address areas of concern such as parental leave benefits, minimum wage, pensions, the impact of technology on women's work, social assistance benefits, child care, and part-time work.

In the first half of the year, committee members visited child care centres in their areas and interviewed child care workers and concerned parents. In September 1988, the committee submitted its recommendations to the federal Legislative Committee on Bill C–144, the *Canada Child Care Act*.

After careful consideration, the committee determined that the issue of part-time work was of critical importance to women in Nova Scotia. As preparation for a background paper on part-time work and part-time benefits, the committee consulted with labour representatives, part-time workers, and employers to assist in the development of its recommendations. The paper is currently in draft stage and will be presented to the Minister of Labour upon completion.

Committee Members

Diane McIlvena, Chairperson (October 1988-)
Agnes Sullivan, Chairperson (June–October 1988)
Catherine Gardiner (resigned June 1988)
Deborah Dort (March 1989–)
Sheri Gaetz, ex officio
Debi Forsyth-Smith, ex officio
Jane Wright, ex officio

YOUNG WOMEN'S COMMITTEE

The Young Women's Committee was established in April 1988 to develop a study to survey the attitudes and concerns of Nova Scotia's younger women. The study would include an examination of career aspirations, educational and employment opportunities, family expectations, and sexuality. The findings and Council's recommendations would be announced to the public upon completion of a survey to be conducted in schools throughout the province.

The committee spent considerable effort attempting to define the parameters of and secure funding for the research portion of the project. Unfortunately, monies were not readily forthcoming.

The Council spoke with women and women's groups across the province about young women through a series of regional consultations. A vast amount of research material on young women undertaken in other provinces was collected and analysed. A fact sheet was prepared and articles were submitted to several publications.

In March 1989, funding for the research portion of this project was secured for fiscal year 1989–90. The design of the study will be refined during the summer, with data collection to commence in the fall. A final report and recommendations are anticipated in the summer of 1990.

Committee Members

Pauline d'Entremont, Chairperson

Linda Carvery (term expired December 1988)

Irene MacIsaac (term expired December 1988)

Sheri Gaetz, ex officio

Debi Forsyth-Smith, ex officio

Jane Wright, ex officio

JUSTICE COMMITTEE

The Justice Committee was established in April 1988 and identified three areas of priority: family law, family violence, and sexual assault. Under the committee's terms of reference, members were mandated to:

- examine the laying of charges by law enforcement officers and the ensuing court and legal experiences of women;

- investigate the lack of serious sentencing for sexual assault offenders as an increasing pattern in Nova Scotia; and
- inquire into the enforcement of maintenance awards and the treatment of women in cases of family law.

In its first year of existence, the committee has engaged in extensive research to become better informed about Nova Scotia's justice system and courts. It has expressed its concerns about court room procedure, judicial attitudes and sentencing patterns to the Attorney General, to the Director responsible for Crown prosecutors, and to the judiciary.

The committee asked the Attorney General to consider the provision of quality educational programs that address sexual assault and family violence with emphasis on the injustice to women as victims. Realizing that such programs must be designed to change public attitudes, the committee recommended that they be required for judges, law enforcement officers, and public school students and that they be accompanied by a public awareness campaign.

The committee also recommended that the Government of Nova Scotia provide resources and support to rehabilitation programs for perpetrators of sexual assault and domestic violence.

The committee gave its support to the Nova Scotia Committee for the Prevention and Treatment of Sexual Abuse by endorsing its statement of principles. As well, the committee is represented on the Nova Scotia Committee on Family Violence.

In the area of family law, the committee reviewed text and suggested revisions to a maintenance enforcement pamphlet produced by the Department of Community Services to advise women of their options with regards to maintenance payments.

Committee Members

Myrna Slater, Chairperson
Marie Crooker
Eyleen MacLeod
Joyce Robart (March 1989–)
Sheri Gaetz, ex officio
Debi Forsyth-Smith, ex officio
Jane Wright, ex officio

FIELD WORK PROGRAM

To reach women outside of the Halifax-Dartmouth area, the Advisory Council established its field work program in 1981. This program has been continually expanded to facilitate communication and a sharing of resources and ideas between the Council and women in all areas of the province. The program is under the direction of Marilyn Berry, Coordinator of Regional Services. In the 1988–89 fiscal year, the program employed five part-time field workers as follows:

Shirley Bardswich
Industrial Cape Breton

Joy Bishop
Kings-Annapolis Counties

Lorrie Melanson-Jones
Cumberland County

Jennifer Rennison
Colchester-East Hants

Heather Robinson
Eastern Shore

Program Objectives

By maintaining an awareness and sensitivity to the needs of the community, the field workers develop and implement programs that address the needs and concerns of women in their regions. They also bring the concerns of rural women to the attention of the Advisory Council and recommend changes in government programming and policy.

Activities

In 1988–89, field workers organized and conducted workshops and awareness days on pay equity, sexual harassment, lobbying, non-traditional careers, entrepreneurship, pornography, sexual stereotyping of women in the media and advertising, a variety of women's health issues, sexuality, child care, and the effects of peer pressure on young women.

ISSUES AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

WOMEN'S HEALTH

In June 1988, the Advisory Council presented a brief to the Nova Scotia Royal Commission on Health Care. The following is a summary of the recommendations contained in that brief:

1) that the Government of Nova Scotia develop and institute a province-wide program of community based women's health centres to provide a full range of reproductive and other health care services to all Nova Scotian women;

2) that medical schools adopt curricula that will encourage realistic attitudes toward women and sensitize physicians to the specific health concerns of women, and offer continuing education programs for those who have already graduated;

3) that an independent body be established to hear and investigate complaints from patients. This body must have the authority to monitor and provide recourse and remedy for complainants and serve to more effectively regulate unacceptable behaviour and practice of the medical profession. We recommend that this body be composed of members of the medical community, legal community, and individual consumers.

Sex Education and Birth Planning

4) that the Government of Nova Scotia recognize the importance of sex education in (i) the prevention of unintended pregnancy, and (ii) the prevention of all sexually transmitted diseases, including AIDS;

5) that access to information about birth control and family planning be improved by adequately funding existing agencies to meet the increased demands for their services;

6) that greater emphasis be placed on developing effective methods of birth control for men; and that increased educational efforts be aimed at improving the sense of responsibility among men about birth control;

7) that greater attention be given to the area of family planning in medical school curricula, especially if doctors are to remain the primary and often sole prescribers of contraceptives.

Pregnancy and Childbirth

8) that the Government of Nova Scotia begin immediately to take steps to integrate midwifery as an independent, licensed and self-regulating profession into the health care system in Nova Scotia;

9) that the Government of Nova Scotia seriously examine the caesarian section rate in Nova Scotia and take some measure to protect women from unnecessary surgical intervention;

10) that the Government of Nova Scotia investigate the unnecessary use of episiotomies, epidurals, forceps, and other high-tech birthing techniques used in Nova Scotia;

Abortion

11) that the Government of Nova Scotia increase funding to expand family planning programs, sex education, and pre- and post-abortion counselling in an effort to reduce the number of unintended and unwanted pregnancies;

12) that the Department of Health and Fitness take steps to improve abortion services in Nova Scotia, especially in rural and small communities, by allowing the procedure to be performed in settings other than hospitals (such as the recommended community-based women's health centres). The Advisory Council believes this to be a less costly alternative to the system of hospital abortion services currently available in the province.

13) that the Department of Health and Fitness ensure that the technology and techniques (e.g., anaesthesia) used for this procedure are the most up to date and that unnecessary medical procedures are never used.

New Reproductive Technologies

14) that the Government of Nova Scotia encourage and endorse the formation of a federal Royal Commission on New Reproductive Technology to allow the Canadian public to consider the impact and regulation of the new technology;

15) that in light of the fact that new reproductive technologies are actively being engaged in and researched in Nova Scotia, the Government of Nova Scotia establish a working committee to study the new technology with representatives from the medical, ethical, nursing, legal, health education, and women's communities.

Prescription Drugs

16) that a system be developed to introduce accountability into the prescribing of drugs;

17) that physicians recognize that symptoms associated with menstruation, pre-menstrual syndrome, menopause, depression, loneliness, stress, and fatigue often have social rather than medical origins and that relief does not come exclusively from drugs, but rather from nutrition, exercise, a decent standard of living, and a non-violent home;

18) that a comprehensive educational awareness program be developed by the government to inform and educate Nova Scotians about the dangers of drug dependency.

SENIOR WOMEN

In September 1988, the Advisory Council submitted a brief to the Nova Scotia Task Force on Aging. The Council's submission focused on three particularly critical issues facing our elderly in Nova Scotia: income, housing, and health. The following is a summary of the recommendations contained in the brief:

1) that the Government of Nova Scotia take immediate measures to raise the income of older individuals; and that income support programs be made more flexible as to offer support to women aged 50–64 who are in need of financial assistance;

2) that part-time workers be granted access to all private and public pension plans on a pro-rated basis;

3) that pension benefits be provided under the Canada Pension Plan in respect of those time periods spent by women in the home either raising children or caring for other people;

4) that special programs be developed for women wishing to re-enter the labour force at a later age;

5) that job creation strategies be developed for women in their later years;

6) that workers over age 65 be included in the Nova Scotia Human Rights Code;

7) that additional subsidized housing for seniors be developed and that seniors be consulted regarding the design and location of such housing;

8) that rental assistance rates provided under the Nova Scotia Rental Assistance Program be adjusted to reflect realistic rent levels as currently found in the Nova Scotia housing market;

9) that the Government of Nova Scotia investigate ways of helping seniors who are homeowners overcome the financial obstacles of remaining in their homes; that income limits qualifying seniors for the Senior Citizens Assistance Program and the Provincial Housing Emergency Repair Program be raised to enable more seniors to remain in their own homes; and that the criteria used to determine eligibility for home improvement programs be standardized so that all seniors will have equal access to such programs regardless of the municipality in which they live;

10) that information about housing programs from all levels of government be made more widely available;

11) that a system be developed to introduce accountability into the prescribing of drugs;

12) that a comprehensive educational awareness program be developed by the Government of Nova Scotia to inform and educate Nova Scotians about the dangers of drug dependency and over-medication. Such a program must teach seniors to question the medications they are prescribed and to assume responsibility for their individual consumption;

13) that programs and services be developed to specifically help elderly women overcome drug dependency and alcoholism.

CHILD CARE

In September 1988, the Advisory Council submitted a report to the federal Legislative Committee on Bill C–144, the *Canada Child Care Act*, recommending:

1) that the Act include provisions that will allow for substantial increases in the salaries of child care workers;

2) that funding under the Act be an open-ended mechanism that will not restrict expenditure on child care;

3) that the Act include national standards for child care that will ensure the quality of child care, not simply increase the number of spaces; and

4) that under Bill C–144, public monies not be extended to profit-making commerical child care, and that commerical operations be given reasonable opportunity to convert to non-profit operations.

HUMAN RIGHTS

In recent months, considerable discussion has ensued throughout the province regarding proposed changes to the *Nova Scotia Human Rights Act*. Based on individual cases of discrimination that have come to our attention and research conducted into several areas of the Act, the Advisory Council submitted the following recommendations to the Government of Nova Scotia.

1) that discrimination on the basis of age be broadened to cover all areas, not simply employment, but housing and all other services and facilities;

2) that the specific age range (40–65) be omitted, thereby providing protection to persons of all ages;

3) that marital and family status be clearly defined;

4) that discrimination on the basis of marital status be broadened to cover all areas, i.e., employment, housing, and services and facilities;

5) that protection be granted to individuals on the basis of family status;

6) that sexual harassment be specified in the Act as a form of sex discrimination;

7) that the Act specify that discrimination on the basis of pregnancy or any pregnancy-related matter is a form of sex discrimination;

8) that sexual orientation be included in the Act

REGIONAL CONSULTATIONS

Effective communication between the Council and the public of Nova Scotia is of prime importance to the Council. In 1988–89, the Council scheduled a series of public meetings throughout the province as part of the regional consultation process. Although Council members represent Nova Scotia geographically, public meetings allow an opportunity for direct input to the Council at a grass roots level by individual women and women's organizations.

The public meetings were held as follows:

June 1988	Oyster Pond
September 1988	Sydney
October 1988	Yarmouth
November 1988	Truro
November 1988	New Glasgow
February 1989	Bridgewater
March 1989	Wolfville
March 1989	Amherst

A number of written and oral briefs were presented to the Council. The topics were wide ranging and included child care, health, education, and job training. Public input received at these meetings will guide Council in developing its plan of action for 1989–90.

PLAN OF ACTION 1989–90

Economic Equality

Pay equity

Legislation covering the public sector will be monitored and recommendations will be made regarding pay equity in the private sector.

Ongoing

Child care

Recommendations reflecting the needs of Nova Scotian families will continue.

Ongoing

A study will be released that compares tax paid as a percentage of toal income by two-earner families that use child care and one-earner families with preschool children at home.

April 1989

Parental leave and benefits

Efforts will be made to document the increasing discrimination faced by many Nova Scotia women regarding pregnancy. Recommendations for changes to the *Nova Scotia Human Rights Act* will be monitored.

Ongoing

The issues surrounding leave for "workers with family responsibilities" will be examined.

Ongoing

Part-time work

A background paper on part-time work will be prepared and recommendations will be submitted to the Government of Nova Scotia.

April 1989

Minimum wage

Further study will be done regarding women and the minimum wage and the issues of the "working poor."

Ongoing

Pensions

Insufficient and non-existent pensions continue to keep elderly women in Nova Scotia poverty stricken.

Ongoing

Council will press for implementation of the recommendations submitted to the Nova Scotia Task Force on Aging.

Social assistance

During the past year, the Advisory Council has become increasingly sensitized to the difficulties faced by women on social assistance.

Ongoing

Recommendations will be made in support of the recommendations contained in *Women and Children Last*.

Education

Council will examine literacy and skills development programs available to women in Nova Scotia.

Ongoing

Justice in Our Courts and Legal System

After investigating and making recommendations in the areas outlined in the 1988–89 Plan of Action, Council has decided to focus its initiative on sexual assault. Recommendations regarding sentencing, prosecutions and services to victims will be presented to the government.

Ongoing

Women and Well-Being

A new committee will be established to focus on aging, mental health, and new reproductive technologies.

Ongoing

A presentation to the recently announced Royal Commission on New Reproductive Technologies is anticipated.

Young Women's Study

(1) A major study will be undertaken to obtain a more detailed picture of the aspirations and realities of adolescent women in Nova Scotia. The study will be implemented in the following phases:

- Review of existing data; consultation with other agencies and government departments whose initiatives impact on the lives of young women. April–September 1989
- Development and administration of survey October–December 1989
- Preparation of final report; submission of recommendations to government January–March 1990

(2) A guidebook of resources for young women will be produced.

- Design and writing of guidebook June 1990
- Introduction and distribution of guidebook in Nova Scotia school system September 1990

PUBLICATIONS

- *Annual Report of the Nova Scotia Advisory Council on the Status of Women*

  For the fiscal year ending March 31, 1988

- *Nova Scotia Advisory Council on the Status of Women*

  A brochure that provides an overview of the structure, mandate and services of the Council

- *Pay Equity: One Step Closer to Equality*

  A pamphlet, briefly defining and describing the need for equal pay for work of equal value

- *Status of Women News*

  Quarterly newsletter of the Nova Scotia Advisory Council on the Status of Women

- *Survival: A Sourcebook for Widows*

  An information booklet designed to held women cope with the emotional, financial and legal aspects of widowhood.

- *Wife Battering: A Criminal Offence*

  A guide booklet designed to help battered women in Nova Scotia

- *Proceedings of a Forum on Pay Equity*

  Sponsored by the Nova Scotia Advisory Council on the Status of Women and Halifax Continuing Education

- *Recommendations 1977–1988*

  A retrospective index of Council recommendations and position statements

Recent Briefs and Position Papers

- Submission to the Nova Scotia Royal Commission on Health Care
- Submission to the Nova Scotia Task Force on Aging
- Submission to Federal Legislative Committee on Bill C–144 (the *Canada Child Care Act*)
- Submission to the Government of Nova Scotia regarding proposed

changes to the Nova Scotia Human Rights Act

To obtain copies of the above publications, please contact our office:

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FINANCIAL REPORT

1987-1988 Actual Expenditures		**$358,047**
Salaries and Wages	$217,738	
Travel	58,121	
Professional and special services	10,755	
Supplies and services	51,816	
Other	19,617	
1988-1989 Estimated Budget		**$410,200**
Salaries and wages	$248,100	
Travel	82,700	
Professional and special services	16,000	
Supplies and services	42,100	
Other	21,300	